Measuring flow in the Willow Slough Bypass, on the western side of the Yolo Bypass.

Award Amount
$288,081

Watershed
Yolo Bypass Watershed

County
Yolo County

CALFED Region
Sacramento Valley Region

Legislative Districts
US Congress: 1 and 3
State Assembly: 8
State Senate: 2 and 5

Purpose

The overall goal of this project is to produce a comprehensive plan to improve water quality within the Yolo Bypass. The plan will account for the diverse interests in, and uses of, the Bypass and aims to make the best and most reasonable use of funds available.

Project Goals

- Identify specific Pollutants of Concern (POCs) currently impacting the beneficial uses of surface waters in the Bypass and downstream Bay-Delta.
- Identify effective, implementable controls for the high priority POCs.
- Develop a comprehensive management plan to improve water quality in the Bypass.

Benefits to the CALFED Program

The Yolo Bypass floodway drains into the Sacramento–San Joaquin River Delta, a source for a number of beneficial uses, including municipal drinking water supplies, water-related recreation, crop irrigation, and aquatic life and wildlife habitat. The Yolo Bypass Watershed Planning Project supports the improvement of Bay-Delta water quality and ecosystem health through a locally based watershed planning program. The project intends to reduce pollutants in the Yolo Bypass, including mercury, other trace metals, and pesticides, that have been identified by the CALFED Water Quality Program as contaminants of concern in the Central Valley. This project provides an opportunity for citizens to participate in watershed monitoring and management planning, and to increase local awareness of CALFED Program goals.

Project Overview

The Yolo Bypass Watershed Planning Project involves development of a water quality management plan for the Yolo Bypass. The 59,000-acre Yolo Bypass floodplain drains directly into the Sacramento–San Joaquin River Delta near Liberty Island. Water quality monitoring has indicated that surface waters in the Bypass do not consistently meet state water quality objectives for some conventional and toxic pollutants. Discharges to the Bypass have been found to include metals, pesticides, and other organic chemicals and toxins to sensitive aquatic life. Beneficial uses of concern for the Bypass include water-related recreation, crop irrigation, aquatic habitat, and wildlife habitat. A major additional beneficial use of the downstream Delta is municipal drinking water supply for northern and southern California. Delta waterways are listed on the State's Clean Water Act (303d) list of impaired water bodies.

Through a locally led surface water monitoring program, the Yolo Bypass Watershed Planning Project identifies specific pollutants of concern that are currently affecting beneficial uses of surface waters in the Yolo Bypass and Sacramento–San Joaquin River Delta. This information is then used to inform a community-based, collaborative process to identify effective, implementable pollution control techniques for urban runoff, agriculture, and publicly owned dischargers.

The expected outcome of the watershed management planning project is the production of a comprehensive plan for improvement of water quality within the Yolo Bypass. Implementation of this plan will directly benefit Bay-Delta water quality and will improve aquatic ecosystem quality.

Agricultural drain looking eastward into the southern Yolo Bypass.

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